

Excerpts from CUNY's Workplace Violence Prevention Training - Employee responsibilities and Tips for Emergency Responses

CUNY Policy

Workplace violence presents a serious occupational safety hazard to the University and its employees. CUNY is committed to the prevention of workplace violence and will respond promptly to threats and/or acts of violence. Incidents involving workplace violence will be given the serious attention they deserve. All employees are responsible for helping to create and maintain an environment of mutual respect, safety, and security, and must report any incidents of workplace violence of which they become aware. The current University policy was adopted by the University's Board of Trustees in September, 2011 and supersedes and replaces all previous workplace violence prevention policies.

CUNY employees are required by law to participate in annual workplace violence prevention training in addition to the initial training received at the time of hire (new employees). This training may be conducted online, in the classroom or via both venues. Finally, in order to maintain a safe working environment, employees are required to report incidents of workplace violence promptly.

Workplace Violations

The CUNY policy has zero tolerance towards workplace violence. Individuals who violate the *CUNY Workplace Violence Prevention Policy* may be:

- Removed from University property.
- Subject to disciplinary and/or personnel action up to and including termination, consistent with University policies, rules, and collective bargaining agreements.
- Referred to law enforcement authorities for criminal prosecution.

Prohibited from seeing an employee or student on University property unless necessary to transact University-related business.

General Reporting Responsibilities & Procedures

All acts of workplace violence whether committed by employees, students, or visitors, must be reported promptly to a supervisor/department chair, or to the campus Human Resources or Public Safety Office. Supervisors/department chairs are required to report such incidents to Public Safety and Human Resources. Employees also are encouraged to report other behavior they believe may lead to workplace violence. No employee will be subject to criticism, reprisal, retaliation, or disciplinary action.

Some Tips for General Reporting

Reporting an incident can be uncomfortable, especially when behavioral concerns are involved. Here are some tips that might help:

- Be calm and clear.
- Stick to the objective facts; don't make conclusions.
- Write down the details so you don't forget later.
- Include names of anyone with relevant information.
- Let the University or your campus handle/investigate the incident.

Notify your supervisor/department chair, Human Resources, or Public Safety if additional incidents occur.

Resolving Conflicts

If you find yourself in a conflict with another person, remember to stay calm and focused, and to pay attention to your body language as well as the other person's. Follow the steps below to help resolve the conflict:

1. Let the other person know it is okay to share his or her view, as long as it is done in a nonviolent, non-threatening manner. The other person will have feelings to express, and it is okay to let this happen.
2. Avoid inflammatory or accusatory language.
3. Be sure the facts around the conflict are clear.
4. Use active listening; paraphrase and reflect back what has been said to ensure proper understanding of what has been stated.
5. Form a plan of action to resolve the conflict. This may require you to call on additional resources such as your supervisor/department chair, Public Safety, and/or Human Resources. If at any point you start to feel threatened, speak up and/or contact your supervisor/department chair, Public Safety, and/or Human Resources

Defusing a Situation

If you find yourself interacting with an aggressive or violent person, or someone displaying strong warning signs, follow these guidelines:

- If at all possible, situate yourself near a door or exit space so you can leave quickly, if necessary.
- Stay calm, speak in a low voice, avoid being judgmental or defensive, do not place blame on the individual, and don't argue.

- Treat the other person with respect regardless of his or her behavior, including avoiding challenging questions.
- Monitor your own and the aggressive person's non-verbal cues – tone, volume, pace, and body language.
- Be aware of everyday objects that could be used as weapons; if possible, remove these objects before they can be used to inflict harm.
- Avoid invasion of another's personal space – stay at least three feet away.

Make others aware of the situation as soon as you can safely do so. If the other person is out of control, don't hesitate to call 911 and/or Public Safety.

Immediate Threats

In the face of an immediate threat of workplace violence which may be committed by a person entering the workplace with weapons, all legal, human resource, employee assistance, community mental health, and law enforcement resources may be used to respond to the threat. First and foremost, the risk of injury to all employees must be minimized. If possible, follow the steps below.

1. Get yourself and any others you can to a safe location.
 - a. Know your exit routes, including non-traditional ones, in advance.
 - i. If you can escape the building, keep going.
 - ii. Warn others from entering the building.
 - b. Get behind heavy furniture or concrete interior walls.
1. Stay low to the floor. Do not confront someone with a weapon, even if you know the person.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c. Avoid confrontational looks or staring at someone with a weapon.
1. Do not call attention to yourself.
2. Contact Public Safety and/or 911 immediately (or as soon as you are in a safe location) to report any of the following information:
 - a. How many people there are, and if you can identify any of them?
 - b. What kinds of weapons the person has?
 - c. Where the person is, where you are, and where any others are?

Are there people hurt?

Active Shooter: How to Respond

If there is an accessible path, attempt to evacuate the premises. Be sure to:

1. Evacuate

- Evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow.
- Leave your belongings behind.
- Help others escape, if possible.
- Prevent individuals from entering an area where the active shooter may be.
- Do not attempt to move wounded people.
- Call 911 when you are safe.

2. Hide Out

If evacuation is not possible, find a place to hide. Your hiding place should:

- Be out of the shooter's view.
- Provide protection if shots are fired in your direction.
- Not trap you or restrict your movement.

If an active shooter is nearby:

- Lock and/or blockade the door.
- Silence your phone and turn off any source of noise.
- Hide behind large items.

If evacuation and hiding out are not possible:

- Dial 911, if possible, to alert police to the active shooter's location.
- If you cannot speak, leave the line open to allow the dispatcher to listen.

3. Take Action Against the Active Shooter

As a last resort, and only when your life is in imminent danger should you attempt to disrupt the active shooter by:

- Acting as aggressively as possible against them.

Throwing items and improvising weapons.

Active Shooter: How to Respond When Law Enforcement Arrives

- Remain calm and follow the officers' instructions.
- Put down any items.
- Immediately raise hands and spread fingers.
- Keep hands visible at all times.
- Avoid making quick movements towards officers.
- Avoid pointing, screaming, and/or yelling.

Do not stop to ask officers for help when evacuating. Proceed in the direction from which officers are entering the premises.

Once you have reached a safe location, you will likely be held in that area until the situation is under control. Do not leave until law enforcement authorities have instructed you to do so.